

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A predictive ~~dialing~~ dialling system for a call center ~~centre~~ including a plurality of agent workstations, each agent workstation comprising:

~~means~~ a display prompting system for producing signals effective to cause a display to display a script for prompting the agent in a telephone conversation with a telephone respondent;

~~means~~ an entering system for entering information obtained from the telephone respondent in response to questions prompted by the script into the workstation; and

~~means~~ a status signal production system for producing a series of status signals indicative of the progression of the agent through the script;

the predictive ~~dialing~~ dialling-system comprising:

~~means~~ a storage system for storing statistical data regarding the connection of previous telephone calls;

~~means~~ a reception system for progressively receiving the series of status signals produced by each agent station;

~~means~~ a prediction system for predicting from the statistical data and those of the series of status signals received at any time how many new calls should be dialed ~~dialled~~ to enable agents, who have finished their previous call by the time each new call is answered by a respective telephone respondent, to take all the new calls; and

~~means for a generation system~~, for generating signals effective to cause said new calls to be dialed ~~dialled~~.

2. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to claim 1 including a database system for storing telephone numbers to be called, and a cache for storing a selection of the stored telephone numbers, wherein when the ~~predicting means~~ prediction system predicts the number of new calls to be made, the appropriate number of telephone numbers are retrieved from the cache.

3. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~either of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the statistical data comprises the percentage of successful telephone connections made out of the total number of calls over a predetermined period of time.

4. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the statistical data comprises an indication of the number of calls in excess of the number of available agents which the system can tolerate.

5. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the statistical data includes the ratio of the nuisance call rate to the nuisance call rate target.

6. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing dialling system according to ~~any one of the preceding claims claim 1~~ in which said ~~means for predicting prediction system~~ is arranged to predict the number, N_{dial} , of calls I from the number I of available agents currently not engaged on a call, the number R, A, G of agents who have currently reached predefined points within a script, the percentage S_r of successful connections out of the total number of calls made in a predetermined time period, the percentage N_r of ~~successful connections out of the total number of calls made~~ calls answered by a respondent but with no agent available to take the call measured over a predetermined time period, and the target percentage N_t of calls answered by a respondent but with no agent available to take the call ~~over a predetermined time period~~.

7. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing dialling system according to claim 6 wherein

$$N_{\text{dial}} = I + \frac{\alpha I + \beta R + \chi A + \delta G}{S_r \left(\theta + \tan\left(\frac{\pi N_r}{2N_t}\right) \right)}$$

where I is the number of available agents currently not engaged on a call;

R, A and G are the number of agents who have reached predetermined points in their respective scripts and have sent said status signals to the predictive dialing dialling system;

$\alpha, \beta, \chi, \delta$ are constants;

S_r is the percentage of successful connections out of the total number of calls made measured over a predetermined time period;

θ is an adjustment constant;

N_r is the percentage of calls answered by a telephone respondent but with no agent available to take the call measured over a predetermined time period; and

N_t is the target percentage of calls answered by a telephone respondent but with no agent available to take the call.

8. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 including means an adjustment system for adjusting the parameters used by the ~~means for predicting~~ prediction system.

9. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to claim 8 including ~~means~~ a user interface system for providing a user interface enabling display of the statistical performance of the system, and ~~means~~ an enabling system for enabling a user to adjust said parameters.

10. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 in which where the number of calls which are predicted is less than the calls which are currently being dialed ~~dialled~~, the system includes ~~means~~ a cancellation system for cancelling some of the calls currently being dialed ~~dialled~~.

11. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system according to ~~any~~ ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 including ~~means~~ a new script initiation system for sending a signal to a workstation effective to initiate the running of a new script at the workstation when the workstation has been allocated a new answered telephone call.

12. (Currently Amended) A scripting system for use in an agent workstation in a call center ~~centre~~, the workstation comprising:

~~means~~ a system for receiving telephone calls; and

a display ~~means~~;

the scripting system comprising:

~~means~~ a display prompting system for providing signals effective to cause the display means to display a script for prompting an agent in a telephone call with a telephone respondent;

~~means~~ a system for recording information obtained from the telephone respondent and sending signals representative of said information to a storage means;

~~means~~ a status signal production system for producing a series of status signals representative of the progression of the agent through the script; and

~~means~~ a system for progressively sending said series of status signals to a predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system.

13. (Currently Amended) A scripting system according to claim 12 including ~~means~~ a reception system for receiving signals from the predictive dialing ~~dialling~~

system effective to initiate the display of a new script synchronised with the receipt of a new telephone call.

14. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ method for a call center ~~centre~~ including a plurality of agent workstations, each agent workstation performing the steps of:

producing a signals effective to cause a display to display a script for prompting the agent in a telephone conversation with a telephone respondent;

entering information obtained from the telephone respondent in response to questions prompted by the script into the workstation; and

producing a series of status signals indicative of the progression of the agent through the script;

the predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ method comprising:

storing statistical data regarding the connection of previous telephone calls;

progressively receiving the status signals produced by each agent station;

predicting from the statistical data and those of the series of status signals which have been received at any time how many new calls should be dialed ~~dialled~~ to enable agents who have finished their previous call by the time each new call is answered by a telephone respondent to take all the new calls; and

generating signals effective to cause said new calls to be dialed ~~dialled~~.

15. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialing~~ method according to claim ~~14~~ 43 including storing telephone numbers to be called in a database system, and storing a selection of the stored telephone numbers in a cache, wherein when the predicting means predicts the number of new calls to be made, the appropriate number of telephone numbers are retrieved from the cache.

16. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialing~~ method according to claim 14 ~~to 15~~ wherein the statistical data comprises the percentage of successful telephone connections made out of the total number of calls over a predetermined period of time.

17. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialing~~ method according to ~~any one of claims 14 to 16~~ claim 14 wherein the statistical data comprises an indication of the number of calls in excess of the number of available agents which the system can tolerate.

18. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialing~~ method according to ~~any one of claims 14 to 17~~ claim 14 wherein the statistical data includes the ratio of the nuisance call rate to the nuisance call rate target.

19. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ method according to ~~any one of claims 14 to 18~~ claim 14 in which where the number of calls which are predicted is less than the calls which are currently being dialed ~~dialled~~, cancelling some of the calls currently being dialed ~~dialled~~.

20. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ method according to ~~any one of claims 14 to 19~~ claim 14 in which said predicting step predicts the number, N_{dial} , of calls from the number of available agents currently not engaged on a call, the number of R, A, G agents who have currently reached predefined points within a script, the percentage S_r of successful connections out of the total number of calls made in a predetermined time period, the percentage of ~~successful connections out of the total number of calls made~~ calls answered by a respondent but with no agent available to take the call measured over a predetermined time period, and the target percentage N_t of calls answered by a respondent with no agent available to take the call ~~over a predetermined time period~~.

21. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ method according to claim 20 wherein

$$N_{\text{dial}} = I + \frac{\alpha I + \beta R + \chi A + \delta G}{S_r \left(\theta + \tan\left(\frac{\pi N_r}{2N_t}\right) \right)}$$

where I is the number of available agents currently not engaged on a call;

R, A and G are the number of agents who have reached predetermined points in their respective scripts and have sent said status signals to the predictive dialing dialling system;

α , β , X, δ are constants;

S_r is the percentage of successful connections out of the total number of calls made measured over a predetermined time period;

θ is an adjustment constant;

N_r is the percentage of calls answered by a telephone respondent but with no agent available to take the call measured over a predetermined time period; and

N_t is the target percentage of calls answered by a telephone respondent but with no agent available to take the call.

22. (Currently Amended) A predictive dialing dialling method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 14 to 21 including the step of sending a signal to a workstation effective to initiate the running of a new script at the workstation when the workstation has been allocated a new answered telephone call.

23. (Currently Amended) A scripting method in an agent workstation in a call center ~~centre~~, the workstation comprising:

~~means~~ a reception system for receiving telephone calls; and

a display ~~means~~ arrangement;

the scripting method comprising the steps of:

providing signals effective to cause the display means to display a script for prompting an agent in a telephone call with a telephone respondent;

recording information obtained from the telephone respondent and sending signals representative of said information to a ~~storage means~~ store;

producing a series of status signals representative of the progression of the agent through the script; and

progressively sending said status signals to a predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system.

24. (Currently Amended) A scripting method according to claim 23 including the step of receiving signals from the predictive dialing ~~dialling~~ system effective to initiate the display of a new script synchronised with the receipt of a new telephone call.

25. (Cancelled).

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Cancelled).

28. (Cancelled).

29. (New) A computer program product, tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium, the computer program product comprising instructions operable to cause data processing apparatus to perform a predictive dialing method for

a call center associated with a plurality of agent workstations, wherein each agent workstation is configured to produce signals effective to cause a display to display a script for prompting the agent in a telephone conversation with a telephone respondent, enter information obtained from the telephone respondent in response to questions prompted by the script into the workstation, and produce a series of status signals indicative of the progression of the agent through the script, the predictive dialing method comprising:

- storing statistical data regarding the connection of previous telephone calls;
- progressively receiving the status signals produced by each agent station;
- predicting from the statistical data and those of the series of status signals which have been received at any time how many new calls should be dialed to enable agents who have finished their previous call by the time each new call is answered by a telephone respondent to take all the new calls; and
- generating signals effective to cause said new calls to be dialed.

30. (New) A call center including a plurality of agent workstations, each agent workstation comprising:

- a display prompting system for producing signals effective to cause a display to display a script for prompting the agent in a telephone conversation with a telephone respondent;

- an entering system for entering information obtained from the telephone respondent in response to questions prompted by the script into the workstation;

a status signal production system for producing a series of status signals indicative of the progression of the agent through the script; and

a predictive dialing system comprising:

a storage system for storing statistical data regarding the connection of previous telephone calls;

a reception system for progressively receiving the series of status signals produced by each agent station;

a prediction system for predicting from the statistical data and those of the series of status signals received at any time how many new calls should be dialed to enable agents, who have finished their previous call by the time each new call is answered by a respective telephone respondent, to take all the new calls; and

a generation system, for generating signals effective to cause said new calls to be dialed.

31. (New) In an agent workstation for use in a call center, the workstation comprising:

a system for receiving telephone calls;

a display, and

a scripting system comprising:

a display prompting system for providing signals effective to cause the display means to display a script for prompting an agent in a telephone call with a telephone respondent;

a system for recording information obtained from the telephone respondent and sending signals representative of said information to a storage means;

a status signal production system for producing a series of status signals representative of the progression of the agent through the script; and

a system for progressively sending said series of status signals to a predictive dialing system.